

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7965

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S E C R T PHNOM PENH 13403

EXDIS

DEPT PASS DIA

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, MOPS, CB

SUBJECT: KC SECTOR 33 APPROACH SEEMS TO HAVE FIZZLED OUT

REF: PHNOM PENH 13088

1. THERE HAVE BEEN NO DEVELOPMENTS ON THE GROUND SINCE THOSE RELATED IN REFTEL. HOWEVER, BG THACH RENG, FANK SPECIAL FORCES COMMANDER, HAS INFORMED DATT THAT FANK G-2 AND GENERAL SOSTHENE ARE NOW CONVINCED THAT THE SIX PERSONS TO WHOM THE FANK COMMISSIONS WERE ASSIGNED, HEADED BY PAK NEAM, AND EVEN INCLUDING THACH YOEURN, THE REPUTED SECTOR 33 COMMANDER, ARE RELATIVELY WORTHLESS AND OPPORTUNISTIC INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE NO REAL ABILITY TO DELIVER ON THE PROMISES MADE. EVEN IN THE CASE OF SAMPHANAKRY, THE INDONESIAN-TRAINED KHMER, FANK NOW BELIEVES THAT HE NEVER REALLY DEFECTED TO THE KC OR HELD A POSITION OF ANY IMPORTANCE IN THEIR RANKS, BUT THAT HE HAS BEEN MORE OR LESS HANGING AROUND ON THE OUTSIDE SEEKING AN OPPORTUNITY TO BARTER SOME SORT OF DEAL WITH SOME KC INDIVIDUALS IN FAVOR OF HIS OWN RETURN TO FANK GOOD GRACES AND TO HIS WIFE AND FAMILY.

2. FANK J-2, BG KIM ENG KOURODETH, CONFIRMED TO DATT THE SUBSTANCE OF BG THACH REGN'S ACCOUNT OF THE CURRENT

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FANK ASSESSMENT OF THE AFFAIR, AS DID GEN. SOSTHENE IN A

LATER DISCUSSION WITH GEN. PALMER. IT APPEARS THAT FANK PLANS TO CANCEL THE SIX COMMISSIONS WITH THE PROVERBIAL STROKE OF THE PEN.

3. ON THE OTHER HAND, FANK 3 RD DIVISION COMMANDER BG NGUON LY KHEANG, WHO HAD BEEN CHARGED WITH ROUTINE CONTACTS WITH THACH YOEURN (REFTEL), HAS TOLD DATT THAT HE BELIEVES THACH YOEURN, ALONE AMONG THE GROUP, IS GENUINE, THAT HE DOES REPRESENT THE MILITARY SIDE OF KC SECTOR 33 AND THAT HE WAS NEGOTIATING IN GOOD FAITH. HOWEVER, BG NGUON LY KHEANG BELIEVED THAT KC LEADERSHIP IN THE AREA HAD GOTTEN WIND OF THACH YOEURN'S PLANS AND HAD MOVED MAIN FORCE UNITS INTO PLACE ALONG A LINE EAST OF HIGHWAY 3 AND FACING THE 3RD DIVISION SECTOR FRONT IN ORDER TO FRUSTRATE WHATEVER PLANS HE MIGHT HAVE MADE. BG NGUON LY KHEANG BELIEVES THAT THERE MIGHT YET BE SOME RALLYING OF INDIVIDUALS AS A RESULT OF THE THACH YOEURN OVERTURE, AND HE WILL CONTINUE TO TRY TO MAINTAIN THE CONTACT.

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY IS FORCED TO ACCEPT THE FANK ASSESSMENT, IN GENERAL, AS TO THE CHARACTER OF THE INDIVIDUALS CONCERNED; IT HAS COINCIDED WITH OTHER INFORMATION WE HAVE RECEIVED FROM OTHER CHANNELS. IT ALSO SEEMS CLEAR THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR A SIGNIFICANT RALLYING IN PLACE HAVE VIRTUALLY VANISHED. WE WILL, OF COURSE, CONTINUE TO MONITOR ANY FUTURE CONTACTS WITH THACH YOEURN AND KC SECTOR 33, AND WE WOULD WELCOME ANY NUMBER OF RALLIERS, EVEN THOUGH IT BE ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS.
DEAN

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